

TORRANCE 10 YEARS OLD AS A MUNICIPALITY

CHAMBER, STARTED IN 1913, HAS BEEN VITAL FACTOR IN DEVELOPMENT OF TORRANCE

Every citizen of Torrance is now a member of the Chamber of Commerce—but back in 1913, when that organization was started there were but 80 members to carry on the work. The story of this all-city group was obtained by the Herald this week from two sources—A. H. Bartlett, city clerk, unearched several tool boxes of early records to provide the history of the Chamber from its organization up to 1921, and then Carl L. Hyde, executive secretary, assembled the data that carried on the account to the present day.

Founder of City Remembered For Gift of Hospital

Determined that their budding community should have the assistance of an organization that would promote Torrance as an industrial center, those 80 pioneer residents, gathered on the evening of April 1, 1913, and perfected the organization of the chamber. Harry Marx was chosen president. Other officers elected were R. R. Smith, vice president; S. T. Major, secretary, and Dr. N. A. Leake, treasurer. The following year Mayor resigned and F. O. Gould took over the duties as secretary.

The City of Torrance is the result of one man's unwavering determination to carve a city out of an acreage of mustard plants and potato fields. In addition to his name, this builder left the municipality with one of the finest endowed hospitals in the country and an inspiration that has created the Torrance of 1931.

This man was Jared, Sidney Torrance, a native of New York state and Yale graduate of the class of 1852, who came to California in 1857. His death in March, 1921, two months before his dream city became a municipality, robbed Torrance of its most outstanding character. In addition to his presidency of the Dominguez Land Corporation, original subdividers of the city, Mr. Torrance was president of the Southwest Museum and the Torrance Association, an organization with business and cultural enterprises.

The first activity of the chamber was the appointment of a committee in October, 1913, to attempt to get Western avenue paved. This first committee was composed of Harry H. Dolley, H. Burmaster, who was the community's first postmaster; S. L. Myers, F. O. Gould and Marx. They recruited petitions and strove mightily to get that street improved but their efforts were fruitless. Western was not paved until several years after that.

The second election, in January, 1914, resulted in the re-election of President Marx and the appointment of Mr. Finley as assistant secretary. The other officers were unchanged. This year saw the formation of the first board of directors, Burmaster, John Salm, Sidney Myose, Dolley and Marx. Myose was chosen president in 1914 with Sam Rappaport as vice president, and Dolley as secretary.

Originally Planned Library
The local man who probably had more to do with assisting Torrance in his plans for a non-profit hospital, such as the city has today, is Dr. J. S. Lancaster, according to statements by residents this week who were in Torrance in its days of infancy. Dr. Lancaster

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There was little activity by the chamber during 1915 in the way of civic improvements because the World War was occupying the center of the stage—even in Torrance. Consequently, the chamber languished and a re-organization meeting in February, 1916, was necessary to put it on its feet again. R. R. Smith was elected president that year; Dolley, vice president; Burmaster, secretary, and Sam Rappaport, treasurer.

BEN OLSON FIRST CHIEF Still Serves Department; Calder Here 5 Years

George Proctor, that fine citizen whose death was a severe blow to the city in 1928, started his career as a leader of the chamber on January 6, 1913. The elapsed time between Smith's presidency in 1916 and when Proctor took over the chair in 1919, was exercised by City Clerk Bartlett, who in this week that there was nothing much doing during those years as the country was engaged in winning the war.

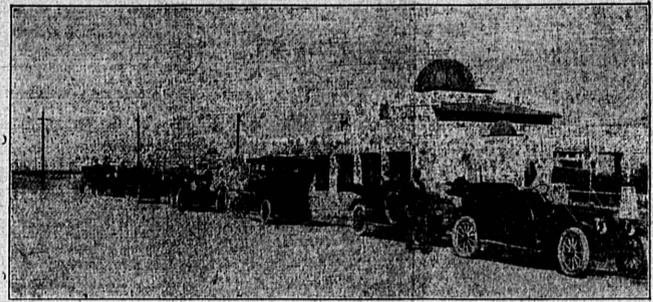
With Proctor in 1919 there was elected W. J. Neelands, vice president; A. H. Bartlett, financial secretary, and L. J. Smith, recording secretary. The next election was held in January, 1920, and resulted in R. N. Aiden, vice president, and Charles Long, vice

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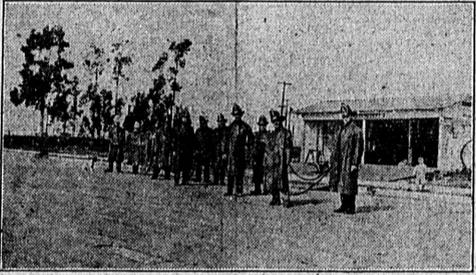
Did you know that the city's first chief of police is still on the department?
He is Ben Olson, now a patrolman. Olson administered to the enforcement of the law during the early years of Torrance's incorporation. Before that time, a system of semi-official town marshals was in effect. The Herald has tried to find out who these first law and order men were but time clouds their identity.

Olson was followed by B. M. Anderson. On May 5, of this year, G. M. "Jerry" Calder, present police chief, observed his fifth year in office. Calder commands a department consisting of John H. Stroh, sergeant; J. B. Edwards, sergeant; W. F. Mallin, motor officer; George W. Dolton, Ben Olson, Frank Schumacher and Ernest Ashton, patrolmen, and two part-time officers, W. K. Adolph, in Waverly, and M. O. Sullivan, in the McDonald Tract.

You're A Torrance Pioneer If You Remember 'way Back When--



—These photos were taken. Here are two pictures which ought to bring back memories to Torrance "old-timers" and a realization of the progress made by the city to the later residents. In the upper picture is the lineup of salesmen's cars waiting in front of the Pacific Electric depot for the special car bringing potential residents to Torrance in January, 1913. The man walking toward the leading car—a Winton Six, by the way—is John S. Daggett, "Uncle John" of KHD fame now. At that time he was salesmanager for the sales company employed by the Dominguez Land Company to exploit the advantages of Torrance.



The lower photo is the only picture in existence of the first Torrance Fire Department. The wheel of the hose cart is just discernible in the left center. The building housing the hose cart was located on Carson street near the MacMarr store. The firemen are left to right, Walter Loucky, assistant chief; Harry McManus, chief; William Poulton, Ben Hannebrink, George Proctor, George Probert Sr., Carroll Ashley, John Mitchell, Billie Lourenson and George Watson. The railroad-tire alarm rim can be seen at the edge of the station.

Tenth Birthday of City Reveals History Of Its Industrial Trend From Beginning

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largest incorporated area in the county—even exceeding Pasadena in size.

The idea of an industrial site, as planned for Torrance was first brought up at a directors' meeting of the Union Tool Company. At that time land was said to be exceedingly high in price and facilities offered were very limited in Los Angeles.

Real Estate Boom Period
Immediately following the plating of the city, its outstanding industrial advantages attracted the Pacific Electric Shops, Llewellyn Iron Works, which later was acquired by the Columbia Steel Company, a subsidiary of the United States Steel Corporation, and other manufacturing concerns.

A great deal of attention was attracted by this early experimental development in a city laid out by such a nationally-recognized firm of city planners as the Olmsted Brothers and partners in planning during the period from August, 1912, to August 1913, were very active. The original plan was to have a place where industry could operate with all the advantages offered by city location, and yet, at the same time, give the workmen in industry opportunities to take advantage of the many desirable factors found in a suburban residential area.

That this plan worked out very satisfactorily is testified today by the present city with its 7271 residents (Federal census, 1930) and its assessed valuation of more than \$28,000,000.

Steady Growth Revealed
The war, and discovery of oil in Torrance area, however, disrupted the plan of workmen carrying out extensive plans for home gardens and small acreage holdings adjacent to the town. The oil development also so over-shadowed the industrial growth of the community that practically the whole impetus of a well-made start toward a carefully planned industrial city was lost, and it was not until a comparatively recent time that any definite plans of industrial expansion were made or put into operation.

Up to May 12, 1921, the city operated under the guidance of the Dominguez Land Corporation. On that date, the City of Torrance was incorporated and councilmen and city officers were duly elected. Since that date Torrance has carried on its municipal life with none of the internal disorder that has been inflicted on many Southern California communities.

There has been steady, conservative progress toward its goal of "the Modern Industrial City." Much territory has been included in its boundaries by voluntary annexation programs carried out in adjacent areas. Its various administrations have been characterized by consistent standard of high citizenship and its future appears secure in the light of present and proposed municipal improvements and industrial advantages.

Gangway! Here Goes th' Hose Cart Fireboys!

In the garage behind the city hall there rests in wait a veteran piece of equipment that played no small role in the community life—and entertainment—of Torrance 19 years ago.

It is stripped of its principal accessories—but presents a glowing front in its coat of recently-applied red paint.

This old-timer is the two-wheeled hand-drawn hose truck that was rushed through the dusty streets of the infant community by its enthusiastic firemen-pullers from 1912 to 1916. No hose now winds around its sturdy girth and the rope to which the volunteer fire-eaters attached themselves for a wild gallop to the scene of the blaze is also missing.

"Alarums and Excursions"
The vehicle was housed in a small frame shed on Carson street between the MacMarr store and the corner brick building at Carson and Craven. It was in this shed that the firemen of 1912 dashed at the first alarm run from a suspended steel locomotive tire when smashed with a sledge hammer that hung conveniently nearby.

Commanded by Fire Chief Harry McManus, now in the plumbing business in Lomita, the volunteers wheeled out the hose cart, assembled along the rope and joyously—if in the daytime—galloped to the conflagration. It is necessary to add that they were accompanied by all the population including the early dogs of Torrance—to their destination?

That first alarm signal has the objective in the early days of most of the young bloods as they returned to their homes late at night from excursions out of the city. They would make for the steel tire and sledge hammer and after whanging it lustily a couple of times, slip off into the darkness and gleefully watch the rudely-awakened volunteers assemble around the fire house in response to the false alarm. This practice was abandoned after the firemen lay in wait for the returning residents a few nights and caught them sledge-hammered. The punishment meted out was according to law and very effective, it is said.

Becomes "Motorized"
McManus served as fire chief from 1912 to 1916. In that last year, gasoline took the place of muscle and the department became, if you please, "motorized" with the addition of a Ford fire truck. The first wall of its brand-new siren sounded the death-knell of the hose cart and the cart was relegated from first one to another out-of-the-way places occupied by the department.

The present Fire Chief, Ben Hannebrink, was appointed to lead the department in 1916 and has served in that capacity ever since. City Clerk Bartlett, who is also a lieutenant on the department, has responded to alarms for the past 17 1/2 years. John Fess, retired merchant, has 12 years fire department experience.

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FIVE FIRST OFFICERS OF CITY ARE STILL SERVING; ADMINISTRATIONS LISTED

During the decade Torrance has been an incorporated city, 21 men have served as councilmen, a review of the official minutes of the City Council from 1921 down to the present day revealed this week. One of the city's first councilmen is still on the job. He is R. R. Smith, now

News Stories Of Ten Years Ago

From the April 29, 1921, copy of the Torrance Herald:
"The Chamber of Commerce would like to have suggestions for a good slogan for Torrance. Put your thinking cap on."
"Failure to comply with traffic rules; Jacob Ienstein, prominent merchant, was arrested in L. A. yesterday. He left his 'Lizzy' running near a fire pit for just a minute."
"Fossil finds in the lime pits of the Torrance Lime and Fertilizer Co. are exciting intense interest in the scientific world."
"Two bungalows, one for Mrs. Lucy Reeve and one for Dr. Leake, are being erected on Arlington avenue, below Plaza del Arroyo."
"It is interesting to note that the moss which is growing around the Llewellyn Iron Works, covering the large lawn, originated from half a dozen small sprouts planted only four years ago."

Following the unexpired term of former-Councilman G. A. Maxwell, who resigned in September, 1920, there was but one polling place for the election of April 12, 1921, when 366 Torrance voters decided the community should incorporate as a sixth-class city by the overwhelming vote of 355 to 11. At the same time George A. Proctor, J. M. Fitzhugh, R. R. Smith and Joe Stone were chosen as the new city's first council. Proctor, who died in 1929, was selected as first mayor. Of that original council, Smith, Gilbert and Stone celebrated the anniversary of the formal incorporation of Torrance May 12. Fitzhugh was killed in an automobile accident September 1, 1930.

Four Other Veterans
Of course there was no city hall in 1921 so the first council met in the offices of the Dominguez Land Corporation, which were then located opposite the Pacific Electric depot at the corner of Cabrillo avenue and El Prado. At this meeting four other city officers responded to the oath of office—and have kept responsibility down through the past decade. They are Harry H. Dolley, city treasurer; William Gascoline, superintendent of maintenance; Perry G. Briney, city attorney; and Ben E. Hannebrink, fire chief. They are the only city officials who have served Torrance throughout its history. Mr. Smith, as councilman, was absent from the city roster for several years before returning to the council table. Other original officers were Robert J. Deininger, now assistant cashier of the First National Bank, who was elected first city clerk; H. R. Postel, city engineer; A. G. Pruitt, city recorder, and Ben Olson, city marshal. Olson is now an officer on the present police force.

CHURCH LIFE CAME EARLY

The first church in Torrance, believed to have been built about 1913, is still serving a congregation, although it has been enlarged and rebuilt.

This was a non-denominational meeting building that stood at the corner of 230th street and Cabrillo avenue until the Baptist congregation took it over, moved it to the site where it is now located at Martina avenue and Carson and rebuilt the structure. The Central Evangelical church, according to information received by the Herald, was the second house of worship in the city.

Today there are many fine churches serving Torrance. These are the First Methodist Episcopal, First Baptist, Central Evangelical, Catholic, First Evangelical Lutheran, Christ Episcopal and First Christian. Other denominations having meeting places in Torrance are the First Church of Christ, Scientist, Latter Day Saints and Four Square Gospel.

First Improvements
There was a big job ahead of this city family, and they had but \$1360 in the treasury. This sum represented the balance of the previous year's maintenance tax collected by the Dominguez Corporation, subdividers of the original city. The tax was paid only by those residents who believed in the community's future and was expended for garbage collection, street maintenance and a sort of fire and police protection.

Mrs. Isabel Henderson, present librarian at the branch court building here, was another original appointive employee of the city, having undertaken the work at the first city library in June, 1921. Dr. J. S. Lancaster was appointed health officer at the same time. Today, under contract with the county, Torrance is relieved of that duty.

Lot Sale in 1912 Brings Residents

Do you know who the first resident land owners in Torrance are? The Herald learned this week that the first three residence lots sold in 1912, were purchased by J. J. Byrne, of 2018 Carson street; R. R. Smith, 2004 Carson street, and George Smith, 1976 Carson street.

After a little more than a month of foundation work the 1921 council embarked on its first public improvement project. This came as result of a petition, the first of nearly 200 that have been received to date by the council, from

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Athletic Association Now Gone -- But Not Forgotten!

Many Still Remember Hilarious Times When Organization Flourished

Eighteen years ago the first of this month, a group of "young bloods" who had established their homes in a community then but six months old, organized to attract county-wide attention for the excellence of its sporting attractions.

This organization, the Torrance Athletic Association, was due to flourish for but six years. The advent of the United States in the World War, with resulting lavish war-time activity on the home front, caused the association to swing its activities so intently in the national military concentration that, early in 1919, it disbanded because of other more pressing interests.

Arena Sports Center
But this Torrance Athletic Association played a prominent role in the creation of the community we know today as the City of Torrance. Today the only concrete evidence that such an organization existed here lies in a city, incomplete minute book compiled by A. H. Bartlett, the city clerk. But in the memories of "old-timers" as R. R. Smith, Harry H. Dolley, Harry McManus, A. Paxman, Sam Rappaport and others, the Athletic Association pungent with strenuous episodes.

Located on the ground floor of the Campbell Hall building, on El Prado near Border avenue, the association maintained club rooms and a space known as the gymnasium. The Association's arena, where many fine boxing shows were staged, is remembered as the principal showplace of the young city. This arena, under a spreading canvas roof, was located on the northeast corner of Carson street and Western avenue. To this pavilion of fisticuffs came the high-spirited Southern

Californians of the day. Its attractions rivaled the exhibitions staged at the old Vernon palace of pugilism, according to many here who remember the Torrance arena.

Lusty Days in Torrance
But boxing shows weren't the only festivities of the Association—there was a stellar ball club which gained considerable publicity for the budding city; there were dances, entertainments and fancy dress balls to which the members squired their wives and lady friends; and there was duck shooting.

This last was a prime sporting event for the Association. For \$60 a season, the organization rented one of the best hunting grounds in the county. This was located at Nigger Slough. Here the members waited in the misty morning hours for a chance to pot the mallards, teal, widgeons, canvasbacks, coots and other varieties that made the Slough a hunter's paradise.

Those were lusty days in Torrance!

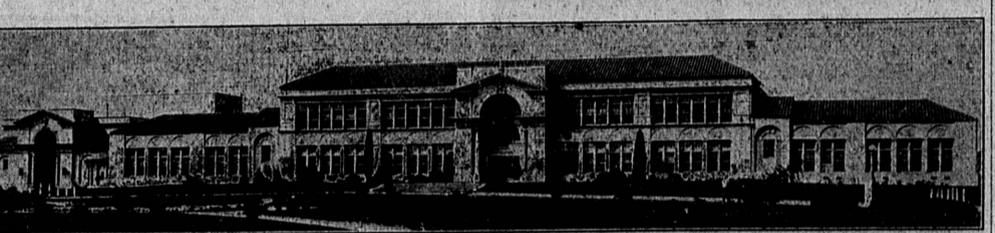
War Disrupts Group
Then came the war—and the community matched stride for stride the movement all over the country to end that sanguinary conflict with the addition of United States troops on the battle lines in France. The Home Guards

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Schools Follow City's Growth



The picture at the left, taken in 1915, shows the first school in Torrance. It was located on Border avenue. The one on the right was taken in 1918, and shows the first building of the present High School, shown below. Photos, courtesy of the High School.



Schools Make Fine Expansion in 18 Years

From a little stucco building on Border avenue, pupils of Torrance schools have advanced through an 18-year period to the fine, modern structures that now accommodate both elementary and high school pupils.

There are no existing records of the number of pupils and teachers here until 1916, when the single building housed 15 students and a

faculty of one teacher and a principal. Today, the total student population in Torrance is 1879 and 75 instructors are engaged in teaching here. The High school has 620 students and 34 teachers. The Elementary schools have 1259 pupils and 41 instructors. This includes the Elementary, Fern Avenue and the Walteria schools.

Wood Hare Five Years
The name of the first principal in Torrance does not appear in the school records kept at the High school, according to Principal Herbert S. Wood this week. Tom Elson, a member of the Roosevelt High school faculty now, was the second supervisor here, having

control from September, 1914, until 1917. At the opening of school that year, Ivey Barnett came here as principal of the High school and he was the director until September, 1926, when Wood took over the operation of the school.

In 1917 the first building of the present High school, the front half of the main building, was constructed and in the same year the attendance was increased to 38 pupils. The entire High school was in one room, now occupied by Miss Mabee. The total value of the land, building and equipment (grammar and high school combined) was \$44,749.

From that year on, Torrance

High school grew rapidly, the rear half of the main building being added in 1921; followed in 1924 by the side additions, the tile roof, auditorium and shops. The library addition and gymnasium were built in 1927. The most recent improvement is the science building, cafeteria and art rooms, which were added in 1929. The present campus comprises 22 acres and has a total valuation of \$620,216.

Departments Expand
The departments also have grown along with the building program. The library, at one time, only consisted of 858 books. There are now 3796 books and 227 bound magazines on file.

1921 - 1931

Ten Year Span Brings Many Changes; Trend of Thought Shown in Writings Decade Ago

Ten Years ago—when Torrance was incorporated—things were quite, quite different than today. The voice of radio was a queer novelty; the motion pictures were speechless; Lindbergh was yet to fly the Atlantic; Mussolini had not marched on Rome and the aftermath of war was still acute.

Just to illustrate the trend of thought in 1921, here's some excerpts selected at random from magazines, speeches and editorial comment published in that year:

"There are already in operation private studios with radiophone equipment which makes it possible to pick up at will messages from broadcasting stations and to magnify them until they fill a large room with sound."—Colliers.

"When a Distinguished Person sprang the word 'normalcy' upon us, little more than a year ago, some protested the word could have no kind of legality. The conflict raged with considerable personality. Finally the word was received with cordiality and began its triumphant march towards universality."—Life.

"We Americans feel that we deserve well of the world because we are immaculately free from coveting what we do not need."—Agnes Repplier.

"Agricultural sections are slowly recovering from the bump of bumper crops."—Herald Star.

"The population of the United States is 16 per cent denser than it was 10 years ago. Judging from things the people fall for, we have feared it was worse than that."—Poughkeepsie Star.

"It is a terrible indictment to modern civilization that our country should be in a state that might almost be called economic chaos because of our surplus food supply while almost half the world is

suffering for want of food."—Secretary of Agriculture Henry C. Wallace in Current History.

"On September 13, 1921, Herr Harth, a German, on a motorless soaring machine rose without any outside assistance to a height of 200 feet and flew for 21 minutes. Here indeed is a remarkable achievement which must make for a new era in aviation."—Scientific American. (Note: The 1931 glider record is 94 miles, made by the Austrian, Robert Kronfeld.)

"The literature of all ages is filled with prophecies that never came true. When Edison exhibited his incandescent lamp, the stocks of gas companies dropped because it was predicted there would be little further use for gas. National magazines predicted that the current business slump was nearing an end in the fall of 1920."

"I have before me statements made by business and political leaders during all the business depressions of the last generation. In every case, very few prophets correctly forecast either the decline or the recovery in business. But it has never failed that when times were good they got bad, and after they were bad they again got good. The surest thing in the world is change. The cheapest thing on earth is advice, and it is usually worth just what it costs."—Floyd W. Parsons in The Saturday Evening Post.